

1st Cavalry Division Museum
Vehicle Data Sheet

Vehicle: M31 - MGR-1B, "Honest John"
Location: Museum Vehicle Pad # A-10
Paint: Semi-gloss OD 34086
Markings: On the right side towards the front is **U.S. Army**.

Historical Background:

Honest John was manufactured by the Douglas Airplane Company of Santa Monica, California. In 1950 Douglas was contracted to develop the MGR-1B. Production ended in 1965 with more than 7,000 in total produced. It was in service with the United States Army from 1951 to 1972. It was the first nuclear armed surface to surface rocket and the easiest United States nuclear weapon to operate in the 1950s. It is an unguided missile but is spin stabilized by the means of small rockets. It is fired from a touch mounted launch rail, elevated to produce the desired range. It had a 762mm nuclear or high explosive 1,500 pound warhead; it had a range of 4 to 23 miles. The last "Honest John" was phased out by the National Guard in 1982.

Missile Characteristics:

Warhead: 762mm nuclear
or
1500 lbs High Explosive (HE)

Range: 4 to 23 miles

Nickname origin:

In December 50, the project was given the popular name HONEST JOHN. A former Redstone Arsenal Commander, BG (later MG) Holger N. Toftoy, was responsible for the nickname chosen. As he related, "Knowing that troops usually came up with their own nicknames for weapons if they did not like the official name, we cast about for a catchy name, easy to remember. Before the actual test firing of the first 762mm rocket, there was considerable controversy in the Pentagon as to its worth. In fact, there was serious consideration in the General Staff of cancellation on the grounds such a large unguided rocket could not possibly have the accuracy to justify further expenditure of funds. At this time, on a trip to White Sands Proving Ground, we ran into a Texan making statements hard to believe. When his veracity was questioned, he exclaimed, "Why around these parts I'm called Honest John." "Feeling somewhat like the Texan at the time, I felt HONEST JOHN would be an appropriate nickname."

ref: <http://history.redstone.army.mil/miss-honestjohn.html>